



Are you advocating for wave energy specifically for Hawai'i or do you see it as a nationwide energy solution?

For any coastal state that has a wave climate that is appropriate for wave energy, I am advocating for wave energy. And it's not just for Hawai'i, but it's all the coastal states that could tap that powerful and amazing resource...I'm very glad to represent Hawai'i because we could become such a renewable energy leader in the whole nation and in the world.

Hawai'i is also trying to become entirely self-sustainable in terms of green energy.

Absolutely. But we can't reach the goal of the Clean Energy Initiative, which is 70 percent clean energy by the year 2030, unless we tap the power of the ocean. And so that's why I've been such a proponent for wave energy for the last seven years, saying we need to take the steps like they're doing in Europe. And in Europe they are providing government support, the national governments, and they're working to set up, for example, wave hubs, which is actually an underwater socket where the wave energy converters can be plugged into that underwater socket. They can test their devices and then the energy can be fed into the grid.

"The states have been taking the lead [on clean energy], but they need the federal government to step in like it did under President Kennedy...the goal was to get [to the moon] within 10 years, and we got there in eight."

MARY ANN CHANGG

Motion for the ocean

Rep. Cynthia Thielen seeks federal funding for a sea-powered Hawai'i

INTERVIEW BY EMILY HOBELMANN

Rep. Cynthia Thielen is one of a dozen legislators from across the nation meeting with top White House officials on renewable energy issues this week. The chosen ones are members of the Coalition of Legislators for Energy Action Now. The Weekly caught up with Thielen, a wave energy advocate, just before she left for the nation's capitol.

Are there functional wave energy systems already in place?

Yes, and there's one that the president saw when he surfed off of the marine base at Pyramid Rock, and that's a small test buoy there. There's a much more major project going in on Maui: Oceanlinx is putting in two wave energy converters off of Maui that will be providing power to the grid...

We're going back to say to the president—I don't know if we're going to be seeing him—but the purpose of this is to say to Congress and the president, we want clean energy legislation now. And we want it now because the states have been taking the lead, but they need the federal government to step in like it did under President John Kennedy, when the "go to the moon" project was announced and the goal was to get there within 10 years, and with America's ingenuity they got there in eight...

You're a Republican... It doesn't necessarily pop into my mind to think of our Republican representatives taking up the torch for clean energy.

I've been a green Republican and one of my models is Theodore Roosevelt, who established the National Park System, and he was a Republican. So I think people need to redefine how they box Republicans

into a certain definition. I've been a green Republican all of my adult life.

If you could get a couple of minutes alone with Obama...

Actually, I've been thinking about that a lot, what I would want to say to him, because it would be brief. It would be: "Mr. President, I hope you saw the wave energy converter in the water while you were surfing at Pyramid Rock on the marine base... That wave energy converter can provide power to the grid, and in fact wave energy converters can provide 80 percent of all the power that O'ahu needs." If I could get that much out, I would be thrilled... But it's not just the president, we'll be speaking with his top advisers. So, I can get the message out in more detail, to be able to say we need the federal support and the federal funding to get wave test centers set up. Not just in Hawai'i, but in other states. And we need to get them so the international companies will look to Hawai'i as the place to come and to build their systems using local talent, using local employees... That's what I want to see happen. My point is, we need Congress to act. We need them to fund and we need them to take a look at how significantly this is being done in European countries and why they're the leaders and we're not.

Editor's note

We're defying expectations left and right this week. Right, as in Emily Hobelmann's Q&A with Rep. Cynthia Thielen about her trip to the White House this week. Thielen has been pressing for clean energy for a long time, and with the GOP on President Obama's mind this week, she couldn't have picked a better moment to talk with his advisers about wave energy in particular. The push for green power and green jobs needs more Republicans like her.

And on the left, of course, because alternative weeklies aren't known for their business coverage—especially not their entrepreneurship coverage. With so many more local folks trying their hands at running their own businesses, it seemed like time to take a look at what resources are out there, and what lessons the professionals have learned, relevant to starting something from scratch. Margot Seeto looks at the ins and outs of Honolulu's emerging entrepreneurial culture.

Of course, not every startup venture turns a profit—but then, not all of them are intended to. Adrienne LaFrance introduces us to a publishing house with a vision for social and personal change. And we don't know whether Alex Sumberg asked surfboard shaper Mike Tuten about his bottom line, but with the unique and extraordinary boards he's making these days, we hope he sticks around long enough to shape 18,000 more.

This week's issue is also notable for something it doesn't include: We don't have a piece on the civil unions process. Instead, we decided to let the paper's readers speak. As noted on the Letters page, we got more mail calling for civil unions this week than we did on any single issue in all of 2009. It probably means the pro-civil unions forces are getting more organized. Hopefully it means we're about to get a law that ensures equality. We'll see.

Groundhog Day is Tuesday.

—Ragnar Carlson

Screening will be held on
Wednesday, February 3 at 7pm
Kahala Theaters
4211 Waialae Avenue

Limit one pass per person/per household, while supplies last. No purchase necessary. Employees and their agencies are not eligible. No phone calls and no walk-ins, please. Envelopes will not be mailed back if not used. Seats are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Pass does not guarantee seating. No cell phones will be allowed in the theatre.

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